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Comments: It is increasingly clear to even a lay person in forest management like myself, that there has been a wrong headed approach to maintaining the healthy forest that we need.

Fighting ALL fires to put them out as soon as possible is one. Another is caused by not allowing disciplined cutting of old growth trees to allow younger growth to mature in succession until maturity.

One of the most sterile sights I have seen was recently at the Smokey Mountains National park entrance area near Townsend, TN. The large old growth tree growth there had kept all younger plants from reproducing and as a result the entire hike my family took of several miles was as if walking in a Disney park with artificial trees only.

There was no signs of ANY wildlife. Not a deer, squirrel, bird, chipmunk, rabbit, nothing! This I believe is caused by the lack of responsible timber cuttings inhibiting any successional growth which is what all wildlife needs to thrive. Simply put there was no wildlife because there was nothing for them to eat!

So if we want to have these park like national forest where for all practical purposes it like walking in a wooded parking lot with no wildlife then keep inhibiting proper timber operations, and burns. In some parts it is the opposite problem where there is too much undergrowth that dies and becomes nothing more than kindling for any spark from lightning or whatever.

Successional forest is very badly needed to preserve several species of birds and mammals and would do a great deal to help such to replenish their numbers. Please correct your approach while it can still benefit our woods creatures.

Do not add more red tape and obstacles that do nothing except hinder responsible forest management.